

Hazrat Maulana Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala protect and preserve him),
Vice President Darul Uloom Karachi

Memories

(Episode 15)

It may appear relevant that I should briefly introduce the Jamiyat Ulama-e-Islam, whose tours I have described previously, and that I should also answer the question which arises in most minds, i.e. is the present-day Jamiyat Ulama-e-Islam the same as at that time or different? But at this point I am writing my reminiscences from my childhood and adolescence. Therefore it does not feel appropriate to stir up that story now. Inshallah a mention of that will come at its appropriate time.

End of Academic Year

I remained absent from Darul Uloom for more than two months due to the travels to Lahore, Deoband, NWFP and Punjab. Consequently, I had sustained a substantial loss to my studies. Though I had continued attending classes in Jamiya Ashrafiya and Darul Uloom Deoband for some time, they could obviously not be equivalent to a regular course of study. And after returning to Karachi, hardly three months were left for our annual exams. I thus had to work quite hard to catch up. The following is my result recorded in the gazette of Darul Uloom for Ramadan 1374 to Shaban 1375, equivalent to May 1955 to April 1956:

Subject	Marks
<i>Kanz Ud Daqaiq</i>	51
<i>Albalaaghah Al-Waadihah</i>	50
Translation of the Noble Quran	50
<i>Sharh Jami</i>	49
<i>Maqamat Hariri</i>	46
<i>Qutbi</i>	41
<i>Usool ush-Shaashi</i>	45
<i>Sharh Tahzeeb</i>	44
Handwriting	45

It is recorded in my diary that Mufti Sabir Ali Sahab took our exam of *Kanz Ud Daqaiq*; Hazrat Maulana Sehban Mahmood Sahab took our exams of *Albalaaghah Al-Waadihah* and Handwriting; the exam of translation of the Noble Quran was taken by Maulana Muhammad Mateen Khateeb Sahab; Maulana Ziyarat Gul Sahab (who later changed his name to Abdul Haq at our respected father's recommendation) took our exam of *Sharh Jami*. The exam of *Maqamat Hariri* consisted of a written paper. Maulana Badee Uz Zaman Sahab took our exam of *Sharh Tahzeeb*, Mufti Wali Hasan Sahab of *Qutbi*, while Maulana Fazal Muhammad Sahab took our exam of *Usool ush-Shaashi*. May Allah Ta'ala have mercy upon them all.

Practice Exercises of Tajweed

Until now, I had not been able to complete a reading of the Noble Quran in front of a teacher. After reading seven *Juz* in front of my teacher in my childhood I had read the remaining parts on my own. As a result, my pronunciation left much to be desired, due to which a feeling of inferiority gnawed at me. To remedy this, I practised Tajweed under several *Qaris* during my study in Darul Uloom. The first of them was the late Qari Muhammad Ilyas Sahab, who was the son of our respected father's (May Allah's mercy be upon him) class fellow Hazrat Qari Muhammad Yusuf Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him), and was a brother-in-law of our brother respected Muhammad Razi Sahab.

He used to conduct classes of *Qira'at* in Darul Uloom. I studied Jamal Ul Quran from him, and began introductory lessons in *Qira'at* from Surah Yusuf. Thereafter, when Hazrat Qari Abdul Wahab Makki Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him) was handed over this responsibility in Darul Uloom, I began practising under him. I still remember this from his lessons, that in one *Riwayah* (recitation) of *Qira'at* of Hafs, *Ishmaam* is done in only one place in the entire Quran, which is in the letter "ن" of the Noble Verse of Surah Yusuf **مَا لَكَ لَا تَأْمَنَّا** . In reciting this "ن" the lips are twisted similar to when one recites the *Dammah* (ُ), but the *Dammah* is not pronounced.

After him, Hazrat Qari Hamid Hasan Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him) was renowned in those days for his melodious voice. He possessed a sensitive temperament and a delicate personality. He would be unable to sleep if even a minor crease formed on his bed sheet. His room seemed as if it belonged to some Nawab of Oudh. He never married, but kept a cat which was his source of entertainment at home. He used to play with it like one plays with children. When it died he was seen crying with tears in his eyes. He was an expert in several recitations of the Noble Quran, and his recitation would mesmerize listeners. I tried to learn from him, but he was as much touchy and sensitive as delicate. I recited to him for one or two days, but then he became angered at some unseemly conduct from me and scolded me. Thereafter, I did not get the courage to approach him and thus remained deprived of benefitting from him. Besides him, during my stay in Lahore I would also visit Qari Abdul Malik Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him) sometimes. He made me practice the last *Rukoo'* (passage) of *Surah Hashr*, and I still remember that when reciting the last sentence of the Surah **وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ** I would inadvertently do a *Qalqala* when reaching the "ل" of "الْعَزِيزُ". Hazrat Qari Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him) corrected me several times but my habit remained. At this, Hazrat taught me the trick that when reaching the letter "ل" I should read the letter "ع" together with it. In this way a *Qalqalah* would not be produced when reciting the "ل". In short, he taught me so much in that one *rukoo'* as would be difficult to learn even in months. May Allah Ta'ala have infinite mercy on him.

Last Year of Darul Uloom Nanak Warah

From Shawal 1375H our last year in Darul Uloom Nanak Warah started. We were scheduled to study *Hidayah Awwaleen*, *Nur Ul Anwar*, *Mukhtasar Al-Ma'ani*, etc., and this was the first time none of our lessons were under Hazrat Maulana Sehban Mahmood Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him). *Hidayah* was given to Hazrat Maulana Mufti Wali Hasan Sahab. We started *Nur Ul Anwar* with Hazrat Maulana Qari Riyatullah Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him), who was an extremely well-liked teacher, and

would make his lessons sweet as honey with his affable style of conversation. However, he was later given a book from a higher grade to teach, so Nur Ul Anwar was transferred to Hazrat Maulana Sehban Mahmood Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him), and we thus received the blessing of being with our beloved teacher for at least one hour.

Mukhtasar Al-Ma'ani, *Sullam Ul Uloom* and *Deewan Mutanabbi* were allotted to Hazrat Maulana Fazal Muhammad Sahab Swati (May Allah's mercy be upon him) who was a highly skilful and experienced teacher. We had had the opportunity of studying some part of *Gulistan* from Hazrat in Masjid Babul Islam, and an overwhelming awe of his personality was entrenched in our hearts. But the love and kindness he exhibited during those lessons was extraordinary, and it is impossible for us to repay him for his favours on us. He also had a charming style of teaching. It so happened that owing to my aberrant temperament I could never get along with *Mukhtasar Al-Ma'ani*. This was because the logical acrobatics contained in *Mukhtasar Al-Ma'ani* were too laborious for my taste. Besides, just the previous year we had studied *Albalaaghah Al-Waadihah* under Hazrat Maulana Sehban Mahmood Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him) with such rhythm and relish, that in the process of studying that book we had also learned how the rules of rhetoric were practically applied, and also did practice exercises in their application. After such a tasteful course I was rather half-hearted in going through the logical gymnastics of *Mukhtasar Al-Ma'ani*. Similarly, after learning the necessary terminologies of *Mantiq* (Logic) I did not have the taste for delving into its detailed discussions. Thus, I did not find much enthusiasm while studying *Sullam Ul Uloom*. On the other hand we studied *Deewan Mutanabbi* with much zeal and fervour, and Hazrat (May Allah's mercy be upon him) also taught it with great diligence. I even memorized several couplets from it. But I experienced the greatest pleasure in studying *Hidayah* and *Nur Ul Anwar*. During the lessons of *Hidayah*, Hazrat Maulana Mufti Wali Hasan Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him) would not only elaborate upon noteworthy points related to *Fiqh* (Islamic Jurisprudence) and *Usool Ul Fiqh* (Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence), but would also bring up topics which would aid in nurturing us holistically, and in fostering our way of thinking. In addition, he would also guide us with regards to expanding our perusal of books. I remember that observing my zeal for writing in Arabic, he told me one day: "There is a book in the library named *Fiqh Ul Lughah*. You should read it". This was the "*Fiqh Ul Lughah*" of Abu Mansoor Tha'laby which I found very interesting, and kept it in my perusal until I began teaching. And it helped a lot in diversifying my choice of words in speech and writing.

It is an age-old tradition in Islamic schools that after attending the teacher's lecture, students form into groups to revise it. For this, they choose a competent classmate from among themselves to re-deliver the teacher's lecture to them. In the lingo of our Madrasas, this process is called "*Takrar*". And the class fellow who is nominated to deliver *Takrar* would try his utmost to present it in the exact same manner as the teacher had delivered his lecture. To do this he would have to thoroughly understand the lecture himself. In addition, since *Takrar* is also a form of teaching, he would need to have the ability to make others understand the topic he's talking about. When a class had more than one student who possessed such abilities, they would take turns to do *Takrar*. And from experience, this process of *Takrar* has been found to be very beneficial for all students. Especially the students who are nominated to conduct *Takrar* get excellent opportunities to develop their teaching skills.

There was nobody my age in my class. As a result, whenever we divided into groups to do *Takrar*, the responsibility of conducting *Takrar* would always fall to the share of someone older than me. Thus, I would normally participate in the *Takrar* as a listener. Often times, my elder brother Hazrat Maulana Mufti Muhammad Rafi Sahab Usmani (May his shade be extended) would deliver the *Takrar*. Allah the Glorious and Most High has bestowed on him admirable eloquence, besides a solid scholarly ability. For this reason his *Takrar* was well-liked by students. My speech was not fluent, and I would stammer while speaking. It is thus understandable that my class fellows would be perturbed by this. As a result, I would seldom be given the chance to conduct the *Takrar*. And I would thus also not get any opportunity to overcome this deficiency.

I was aware of my shortcoming, and was concerned about overcoming it. A godsent remedy to this occurred in the form of a student from Quetta, who was much older than me and in his Balochistani turban would appear twice my size. He joined Darul Uloom in the middle of the academic year, in the first year of Arabic studies. He began studying the lessons he had missed from various fellow students. I offered to teach him "*Arabi Ka Muallim*". Perhaps he would not have been too keen to study under a scrawny, playful student who was half his age, but because of the Arabic speeches which I would parrot out in the various assemblies in Darul Uloom, a perception of my Arabic skills, despite my young age, had become established among students. He therefore agreed to study with me, and I started teaching him "*Arabi Ka Muallim*" in the afternoon, after the fourth period.

Instead of the bearded "student", it was the twelve-year old "teacher" who would eagerly wait for the appointed time. As soon as the fourth period would end, I would speedily head over to our agreed place and wait for him. He transpired to be rather nonchalant. He would arrive unhurriedly, while each minute of waiting for him would bear heavily on me. At times he would be absent without informing me, and I would remain tangled in the dilemma as to whether I should seek him out, which felt to be against "teacherly" dignity, or not, in which case how could I miss out on the pleasure of teaching? At long last the zeal to teach would defeat the "teacherly" dignity, and I would seek after him in various classrooms. When the appointed time would elapse, I would wait for the next day. The next day, he would arrive nonchalantly, and I would not have the courage to ask him the reason for his absence. And he would open up the book as if nothing had happened. I would sometimes assign him homework to translate from Urdu to Arabic, which he would sometimes do and sometimes not. I was not in a position to interrogate him regarding this, because I feared he may stop coming and leave me high and dry.

I needed him so that I could deliver the lecture to him and make my speech accustomed to fluency. And Alhamdulillah! The ability to convey my thoughts gradually developed into a habit, to some extent. He would tolerate me with patience and composure, while I would put up with his nonchalance. By the time we had finished the first part of "*Arabi Ka Muallim*" my speech had acquired a certain level of confidence. In this manner, he was my real teacher who taught me how to teach and speak, because it was through him that I received the training to develop my speech. I don't know his whereabouts now. I don't even remember his name with certainty (I seem to recall that his name may be Akhtar Muhammad). But wherever he may be, may Allah the Glorious and Most High bestow his Mercies and Blessings on him for the great favour he did to me.

Anyway! After going through this training course my classmates agreed to let me deliver the *Takrar*. Due to Bhai Sahab's eloquence, it would have been difficult for his group to endure my *Takrar*. So I sought out such companions as would be ready to put up with my half-baked speech. And in this manner, I also began getting more opportunities of conducting *Takrar*, and my speech improved further as a result.

Once, an institute in Nazimabad, Karachi organized a Speech Competition around the theme of *Seerat Un Nabi* (Peace be upon Him). They invited students from various Madrasas and schools to take part. The topic of the speech was to be: "The Noble Messenger (Peace be upon Him) was the greatest law-maker". Hazrat Mufti Wali Hasan Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him) instructed us to participate. Until now I had only delivered the few-minutes-long parroted speeches in Arabic in Darul Uloom's internal gatherings, and had never delivered one outside Darul Uloom ever. I was thus a bit nervous. But Hazrat encouraged me and not only guided me towards important points regarding the topic but also dictated some to me. And I made the speech based on those points. I was thirteen years old. Students much older than me had also participated in the competition. It was either a miracle of the points dictated by Hazrat Mufti Wali Hasan Sahab (May his secret be sanctified) or perhaps the judges were emotionally affected by my young age, that I got the first position in the competition. I was presented an Urdu translation of Imam Ghazali's (May Allah's mercy be upon him) "*Al-Murshid Al-Ameen*" as the prize. This was my first speech in a public gathering.

At that time, a pool of highly knowledgeable, erudite teachers was teaching at Darul Uloom. Besides the teachers I have mentioned above, Hazrat Maulana Muntakhab Ul Haq Sahab, Hazrat Maulana Mazhar Baqa Sahab, Hazrat Maulana Ubayd Ul Haq Sahab of Sylhet, Hazrat Maulana Taseen Sahab, Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Mateen Khateeb Sahab, Hazrat Maulana Mufti Sabir Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon them all) were all imparting their knowledge. I was also keen to spend some time in the service of those teachers under whom I was not studying any book. To this end, I would occasionally visit them. And due to my young age, all of them would treat me very kindly, and would also counsel me through their teaching experiences.

Our respected father (May his secret be sanctified) was such a personality that whenever scholars or dignitaries from throughout Pakistan would visit Karachi, they would be certain to visit him. And our respected father (May Allah's mercy be upon him) would invite them to visit Darul Uloom and request them to advise the students. I thus saw Hazrat Maulana Mufti Muhammad Hasan Sahab, Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Idris Sahab Kandhlavi, Hazrat Maulana Khair Muhammad Sahab, Hazrat Maulana Ahmad Ali Sahab Lahori and Hazrat Maulana Ataullah Shah Bukhari (May Allah's mercy be upon them all) at such instances. I remember that Hazrat Maulana Ataullah Shah Bukhari Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him) was wearing an ochre-coloured dress, and when someone introduced me to him as Hazrat Mufti Sahab's son, he picked me up in his arms.

American and British Invasion of the Suez Canal

The most harrowing news that year for the Muslim world was the Israeli attack on the Sinai Peninsula on 29 October 1956, and two days later Britain and France attacked the Suez Canal. This event had a deep effect on our respected father (May his secret be sanctified), and he wished for the entire Muslim world

to stand up for Egypt. To achieve this, he wrote letters to leaders and notable personalities of the Muslim world. Also, in order to demonstrate Muslim solidarity against this attack, he tried to prepare a medical team to aid the Muslims.

To this end, our respected father (May Allah's mercy be upon him) wished to arrange for military training in Darul Uloom so that trained volunteers from Darul Uloom could be sent to Egypt, if needed. When this could not be set up immediately, our respected father (May Allah's mercy be upon him) contacted the Civil Defence Department and persuaded them to send their instructors to Darul Uloom to train the students in civil defence. Consequently, a civil defence training program began to take place daily after Asar. Initially, respected Badrul Hasan Farooqi Sahab started coming from 7 November 1956, equivalent to 3 Rabe' Ath-Thanee 1374H, and conducted training for civil defence and first-aid. We students participated in that course with much zeal and zest. I was in the thirteenth year of my life, and I remember that we were under the misconception that this course will eventually culminate into a training for Jihad. We would thus fantasize ourselves in the battlefield in Egypt, and in our childish minds would conjure up scenes of us engaged in fierce combat with the Israeli and British soldiers. The war eventually ended after Russia's intervention and the areas captured by Israel were also returned, but we continued attending the course with the same fervour, in the false hope that if nothing else, we may perhaps still be sent to attend to the injured of the war.

While attending the training I also recorded all the lectures of Farooqi Sahab in a notebook, and also included, to the best of my ability, the practical exercises he had conducted. I later passed this notebook to Farooqi Sahab to review. While I don't know if he reviewed it or not, he returned the copy after a few days with the following note:

"Though youngest of all the trainees yet paced with others throughout the training. Intelligent and keen student. Proved himself to be a willing worker. Remained anxious to learn more and more from his elders.

Recommended for higher training.

BH Farooqi.

Gen Instructor."

When he had written this note I did not know enough English to understand it. I thus got it translated from my elder brother, respected Maulana Muhammad Wali Razi Sahab, and got the translation written below the note:

"اگرچہ طلبہ میں سب سے زیادہ کمسن ہیں، لیکن تمام طلبہ کے ساتھ پوری ٹریننگ کے درمیان ساتھ ساتھ رہے، ذہین اور شوقین طالب علم ہیں، خود میں مہارت پیدا کرنے کا شوق ہے، اپنے بڑوں سے سیکھنے کے ہمیشہ مشتاق۔ اعلیٰ ٹریننگ کے لئے بھیجا جائے۔"

Though the war had already ended, this training, at least in terms of intention, had instilled in us such zeal for Jihad that we requested our respected father (May Allah's mercy be upon him) to organize regular military training in Darul Uloom. Our respected father accommodated this request, to the extent

which was legally permissible at the time, when we moved to the new building of Darul Uloom, a mention of which may come later.

The following were my results in the annual exams that year:

Subject	Marks
<i>Hidayah Awwaleen</i>	51
<i>Nur Ul Anwar</i>	50
<i>Mukhtasar Al-Ma'ani</i>	45
<i>Talkhees Ul Miftah</i>	47
<i>Sullam Ul Uloom</i>	40
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Handwriting	45